

# GAPERS BLOCK

Gapers Block accepts all sorts of submissions, including tips, news releases, materials for review, event announcements and, most importantly, articles and features from local writers. Writers may be particularly interested in our [new feature writing program](#). Below are submission guidelines for our various sections.

Our mailing address is:  
Gapers Block Media  
PO Box 13524  
Chicago, IL 60613

However, if it's emailable, please email it to [inbox@gapersblock.com](mailto:inbox@gapersblock.com). If there's a particular staffmember who you think would be most interested, feel free to send the item to them directly. (You'll have to find their personal email address yourself; most of us are easily googlable.)

## Merge

We welcome your suggestions for our "news" section — which is actually a lot more than just news. We're also looking for interesting websites, cool stories, online resources — whatever, as long as it has a connection to Chicago or the vicinity. Things don't get posted in Merge unless there's a link we can point to, so please include one. Take a look at what we've posted before, and send in your links to [inbox@gapersblock.com](mailto:inbox@gapersblock.com). If we use the suggestion, we'll be sure to thank you in the post — unless you're a publicist, in which case the post is thanks enough, right? :)

## Slowdown

We are interested in all sorts of events — concerts, performances, art openings, lectures, gatherings, you name it — for Slowdown, our event calendar. When submitting an event, please include the name of the event, date and time, a brief description, cost and a way to get more information — either a phone number or website. Send it to [inbox@gapersblock.com](mailto:inbox@gapersblock.com) (and *only* this address). **Please note:** submission alone does not guarantee that the event will be make it on the calendar. We receive hundreds of event announcements a week, and there is no way we're posting all of them. Please don't take it personally if we don't list your event.

## Topical Blogs

Gapers Block's topical blogs include [A/C](#), covering arts and culture; [Book Club](#), covering our actual book club as well as the local lit scene; [Drive-Thru](#), covering food and drink; [Mechanics](#), covering city, county and state politics; [Tailgate](#), covering sports major, minor and miniscule; and [Transmission](#), covering music. Each blog has its own dedicated staff, and accepts story ideas

and materials for review. Some are also open to article submissions from outside authors, and all are open to feature pitches; see below. Please contact the editor of each blog with any questions or submissions.

## Rearview

Rearview photos should be Chicago-centric but needn't be all skyline shots and tourist postcards — send your portraits, street photography, photographic explorations and excursions our way. As long as it's not a photo of the Empire State Building, we're kosher. Take a look at some of the photos in [Rearview](#) or in the [Gapers Block Flickr Group Pool](#) to get an idea.

As of August 2007, we're changing out photo submission methods from two to just one.

### Submit via Flickr:

- If you have a [Flickr](#) account, you can add your photo for consideration for Rearview by adding it to the [Gapers Block Group Pool](#). If you don't have a Flickr account, we suggest you sign up for one. The pros are worth it.
- Photos should be no smaller than 700 pixels wide or high. If the photo is too small, we will not use it.
- You can submit as many as you like to the pool, but only three per day.
- Submission to the pool does not guarantee publication. However, your photo will be seen by fellow photographers and the Flickr community at large.

## Community News Matters Feature Funding Opportunities

Gapers Block has established a program to fund original local reporting thanks to a Community News Matters grant from [The Chicago Community Trust](#) and the [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#).

Under the terms of the grant, freelance journalists and Gapers Block staffers may propose pieces that are locally oriented and primarily about underserved neighborhoods and issues that affect them, although there is room for other ideas too. Selected articles are produced on a weekly schedule through a process in which reporters work with appropriate section editors to develop their stories. Reporters have a minimum of two weeks to complete a story.

The sorts of stories we're looking for will vary depending on the section; here are some examples:

- [A/C](#) : An in-depth interview with an artist working in Pilsen. A profile of the local indie film scene. A report on after-school arts education programs around the city.
- [Book Club](#): A profile of an up-and-coming local author. An investigation of the plight of independent bookstores.
- [Drive-Thru](#): A guide to local eateries in Hermosa or some other neighborhood. A day in the life of a farmers market. An look into the food options in a food desert.

- [\*Mechanics\*](#): An investigation of the effects CTA cutbacks have on neighborhoods that lose service. Profiles of lesser known aldermen (or even the better known ones). A report on an issue before City Council.
- [\*Tailgate\*](#): A profile of a youth sports program getting kids off the streets. A report on the state of Park District ball fields. Interviews with Chicago Force women's football players.
- [\*Transmission\*](#): In-depth interviews with local musicians. A round-up of all-ages venues in the city & why there are so few. Profiles of lesser-known musical genres in the city.

We are also open to story ideas involving multimedia — audio or video. We're working on developing guidelines for multimedia stories, but if you have a multimedia idea, please don't hesitate to propose it.

## Payment

Writers will be paid \$150 for a feature-length story (800-1,000 words). A small fund will also be available to cover reporters' expenses, such as parking.

Payments (by check, unless you prefer PayPal) will go out during the first week of each month. You'll be expected to fill out a W9 tax form if you write more than a couple stories for us (earnings over \$600 have to be reported by both you and GB).

## Pitching Procedure

Editors review pitches at the beginning of each week to select "winning" pitches and give feedback on others. If you have an idea in which you think we may have an interest, email the following information to [pitches@gapersblock.com](mailto:pitches@gapersblock.com) :

Your Name  
A short working title  
A short abstract  
Your proposed timeline  
Your proposed GB section (e.g. A/C, Drive-Thru)  
Any special requirements

Please note that while most pitches receive feedback following the first review, some pitches may be included in two review sessions before a determination is made.

## Join Us!

Gapers Block is always looking for new contributors. We're looking for folks who share our passion for the city — how many great and interesting things are going on, how many amazing people and places and events are here — and are excited to share all of it with the world (or at least other Chicagoans). If you're interested in writing for us and have an enthusiasm for Chicago, we'd love to hear from you.

Staffers are expected to write a minimum of eight posts a month in their respective section. All posts must relate to Chicago or the surrounding area in some way, and ideally should contain at least one link — in the case of Merge, that "ideally" is actually a "must." In addition, all staffers are expected to post calendar events in Slowdown. Spelling and grammar skills are important, and the ability to write concisely is valued. Some basic html knowledge is a plus although not strictly required. We run on Movable Type; if you're not familiar with it, no worries, it's easy to learn.

What do we want covered? Whatever you think is worth sharing with others, and relates to Chicago. That could include news, blogs, photos, online projects, businesses, t-shirts, upcoming events... Our rule of thumb is, if it's interesting to you, it's probably interesting to at least some of our readers. We also get tons of email about stuff happening around the city, so if you find yourself running out of ideas, there's a pile in our inbox to pick through.

Please note that **we are a volunteer organization**. At this time, we are unable to pay our contributors — but there are definitely perks to being on staff. If you're up for the job, email Andrew Huff, editor in chief, at [ah@gapersblock.com](mailto:ah@gapersblock.com) with some background about yourself and your interests, as well as a writing sample or two. Links to work you've done elsewhere are also appreciated. We look forward to hearing from you!